

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BELIZE 00373 090117Z
ACTION SS-25

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INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0115
AMEMBASSY MEXICO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T BELIZE 0373

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR GT BH UK MX
SUBJECT: BELIZE DISPUTE

REF: (A) STATE 128822; (B) GUATEMALA 3588

1. SHOULD DEPARTMENT WISH CONGEN'S COMMENTS REGARDING DEVELOPMENT REPORTED REF A, WE WOULD DEFER TO VIEWS OF PRINCIPAL OFFICER J. L. GAWF, WHO WAS TO HAVE ARRIVED IN WASHINGTON AREA ON JUNE 7 AND CAN BE REACHED C/O ARA/CEN OR M/DG/CDA (NANCY OSTRANDER). HOWEVER, WE OFFER SEVERAL OBSERVATIONS.

2. REF E DOES NOT MAKE CLEAR WHETHER OR TO WHAT DEGREE DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICIALS HERE MAY HAVE INFLUENCED CABINET COMMITTEE DECISION, BUT OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSULTATION WERE NOT LACKING. GOVERNOR MCENTEE HAS BEEN IN UK ON HOME LEAVE FOR PAST MONTH (HE IS DUE BACK IN BELIZE THIS WEEKEND⁹, AND PREMIER PRICE REPORTEDLY WAS IN LONDON FOR SHORT TIME DURING SAME PERIOD.

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3. COINCIDENTALLY, PREMIER DEPARTED FOR UK LAST WEEKEND FOR COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE, AND JUNE 8 EDITION OF OOB-CONTROLLED BELIZE TIMES REPORTS PRICE EXPECTED TO ASK FORMALLY FOR "ESTABLISHMENT OF A COMMONWEALTH PEACEKEEPING FORCE TO GUARANTEE INDEPENDENCE AND TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF BELIZE". THIS IS ONE OF SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL PEACEKEEPING SCHEMES PRICE HAS FLOATED IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE

OVER PAST SEVERAL MONTHS, MOST NOTABLY DURING RECENT TRIP TO PANAMA WHICH CONTRIBUTED TO GUATEMALA'S BREAKING OFF RELATIONS WITH PANAMA.

4. THERE APPEARS TO BE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME SORT OF LEAKAGE OF DECISION ON BELIZE QUESTION HAS ALREADY OCCURRED. INFORMAL COMMENTS BY BRITISH MILITARY INDICATE THEY EXPECT NEXT ROUND OF SABER-RATTLING TO BEGIN EARLY PART OF JULY. HOWEVER, SOURCE OF THEIR INFORMATION DOES NOT APPEAR TO BE OFFICIAL CHANNELS, BUT AN ARTICLE IN RECENT EDITION OF MANCHESTER GUARDIAN.

5. MORE DISTURBING IS NHACCE REMARK MADE TO CONGEN FSL BY CLERK OF BELIZEAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES WHO SAID PREMIER PR ICE CURRENTLY IN LONDON TO CONDUCT "EXTREMELY SENSITIVE BUSINESS." CLERK IS NOT HIGHLY REGARDED LOCALLY, AND, IF HE WAS REFERRING TO ANYTHING BEYOND PREMIER'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION OF SEEKING COMMONWEALTH PEACEKEEPING FORCE, THEN INFORMATION ABOUT POSSIBLE ACTION ON INDEPENDENCE QUESTION SOMEHOW MAY HAVE REACHED RATHER APPALLINGLY LOW LEVELS OF BELIZEAN OFFICIALDOM AND BELIZEAN RUMOR MILL CAN BE EXPECTED TO REACT HYPERACTIVELY.

6. WE LEAVE TO PRINCIPAL OFFICER GAWF TO ASSESS THOUGHT HERE THAT DRAGGING OUT OF INDEPENDENCE ISSUE OVER A DOZEN YEARS AND CONCERN OVER UPCOMING ELECTIONS (BELIZE CITY THIS YEAR, NATIONAL BEFORE END OF 1979) MAY HAVE PRICE IN POSITION OF CONCLUDING THAT IMPRESSIVE ACTION NGW INDICATED FOR DOMESTIC POLI-
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TICAL REASONS. THIS WOULD OF COURSE DOVETAIL NICELY WITH HMG DECISIONIREPORTED REF A AND, ASSUMING THERE WERE CONSULTATIONS, COULD CONCEIVABLY HAVE INFLUENCED CABINET COMMITTEE.
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